

Dear Sir:

The American people own the airwaves media companies use. I am wholeheartedly against the repeal of regulations that will allow major conglomerates to determine what content is available on MY airwaves.

Perhaps the incident in Minot, ND can be dismissed as a fluke; though I'm sure the 300 people who were hospitalized, because of the local authorities' inability to effectively sound a warning, would beg to differ. Just imagine listening to the radio, innocently bopping along to whatever Clear Channel decides you get to hear that night while a cloud of poisonous gas inexorably wafts your way. It is shocking that so many politicians will authoritatively intone the importance of "vigilance" (and all the other safety buzz-words inescapable in a post 9/11 America) while simultaneously entertaining the notion of removing some of the most significant guarantors of public safety.

There is simply no reason to remove the restrictions barring one company from owning every single media outlet in a given city. How could circumstances such as that possibly benefit the public at large? Those media conglomerates may have financial reasons to want deregulation--can anyone say "advertising revenue streams"?--but such monopolies represent a grave disservice to the American people.

Not all regulation is, per se, bad. These laws prohibiting one company from controlling all the information, content and perspective remain a small hedge against the very real dangers of information distribution monopolies. If one company is capable of controlling every avenue of a city's information super-highway, the company would have no incentive at all to avoid manipulation of that content. After all, who else would report what the monopolist deemed unnecessary, unflattering or unprofitable? Do we ever hear Peter Jennings sound pessimistic about Disney?

Do not treat me, your constituent, with contempt by selling out to these existing and potential media giants. I insist my newspapers, television, radio, and internet to reflect local issues and concerns. I require the content of my media be represented by a variety of differing voices. I implore you to ensure MY airwaves serve the American people in the ways best for the American people, not huge conglomerates. I adamantly refuse to revoke my public ownership rights of the airwaves.

Thank you,
Sarah Kelleher